

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 4, line 14, with the following replacement paragraph:

In accordance with the invention, user anonymity is provided by an intermediary machine configured to mediate communications between a user machine and multiple web site operator machines in a network. An association is established in the intermediary machine between real identity information for a particular user, e.g., a user name, a user electronic address, a user shipping address, and a user credit card or other payment card number, and corresponding alias identity information for the user, e.g., a user alias, an alias electronic address, and an alias profile characteristic. At least a portion of the alias identity information is supplied from the intermediary machine to a given web site operator machine in conjunction with an action by the user, e.g., a portion of the alias identity information may be supplied to the web site operator machine in conjunction with a request of the user for access to the corresponding web site. All communications between the user machine and the web site operator machine may be directed through the intermediary machine, such that the web site operator machine never receives the user's real identity information.